

Cloverdale Not-For-Profit Counselling Centre Opens In Cloverdale

“Our space is meant to linger, to be engaged, to be in community with us and have a real sense of belonging,” said Elsje Hannah, owner and co-founder of Soul Matters Counselling, a not-for-profit centre that recently opened its doors in Cloverdale.

Hannah is a registered clinician as is her Soul Matters cohort and co-founder Jillian Hart. Although new to the Dale Building in Cloverdale, Soul Matters Counselling launched in 2013 on Salt Spring Island.

“We saw a need for affordable counselling services without the wait-list of government funded programs,” said Hannah. She noted that private practices were the only other option available to residents of Salt Spring Island and often the session fees are unattainable.

“Our suggested fee is \$50 per session and can be modified as needed,” said Hannah.



“We have been successful on Salt Spring Island and have helped many people, families and children and now are hoping to offer the same great service to the community of Cloverdale,” Hannah explained.

The Soul Matters not-for-profit model is unique and required some ingenuity. First and foremost, Soul Matters Counselling is powered by interning clinicians completing their Master’s Program and working towards their Master of Arts or Master of Education. These interns are sourced from local universities and partner with Soul Matters anywhere from five months to a year and work with clients one-on-one. In addition to exceptional hands-on experience Hannah and Hart also pair each intern with an accredited supervisor and practicing therapist to offer support and guidance.

“We chose this work space for its central-



Hart, Hannah, her husband Pete, daughter Rachel, friends and family all pulled together to rework the space while maintaining the railroad essence of their area. Fluorescent lights were swapped for industrial style fixtures, lamps glow in every corner, it’s a green thumbs paradise with plants occupying every flat surface and reclaimed barn wood was added to accent walls. The only bank-e-s-que feature that remains from the structures previous purpose is the vault. Hannah and

Hart have a desire for clients to travel the length of the space and were purposeful in creating flow. It begins with entering into the sitting area with high backed sofas, leads to the coffee and tea bar which is opposite the lending library. Down the hall there are three tranquil and private session spaces. At the end of the hall is the walk-in, roomy bank vault with a bench, flickering candles, gentle music and alter for reflection, prayer or meditation.

“Sometimes our clients have had a hard session or maybe they have a big conver-

ity and also for its ability to welcome people with physical disabilities. We want people to know that counselling is accessible for everyone,” said Hannah.

sation ahead of them, so we wanted to provide a space to pause instead of getting pushed back into the hustle and bustle outside our doors,” explained Hannah, standing inside the repurposed vault. “It can feel quite jarring otherwise.”

Outside the vault door is a vibrant crafting corner.

“Sit for an hour,” encouraged Hannah, “make a project and go home with it. It helps balance the brain.”

Crafting is for the adults, too, especially the looms for weaving and exploration of the fiber arts.

Children are also supported under Soul Matters Counselling and have two spaces exclusively for them. There are couches, bookcases brimming with toys, spots to sit and draw and a cozy, closed in space called the Cuddle Cubby with twinkle lights overhead.



“This is a place where emotional needs get met, sometimes for the first time,” said Hannah. Hannah’s decision to expand her own private practice,

Healing Place, from Salt Spring Island to Cloverdale simultaneously provided Soul Matters Counselling with a permanent space as well. Hannah provides full-fee therapy to individuals who do not require subsidized services. It is a purposeful partnership.

“If you do not have extended benefits and could use support, please reach out to us,” said Hannah, “Soul Matters is here for you.”

Elsje, Jillian and their interning clinicians can be reached at 250-221-2015 or via their website www.soulmatters.ca